

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

BAN LIFTED



NO TO HOMOSEXUALITY — John Stemberger (at podium), founder of OnMyHonor.Net, addresses members of the media at a press conference immediately following the rally to welcome delegates to the National Annual Meeting of the Boy Scouts of America, Inc., in Grapevine, Texas. Surrounded by Boy Scouts, Scout Leaders, and concerned parents, Stemberger urged delegates to vote "No" on the resolution to lift a ban on openly gay Scouts and to "keep sex and politics out of scouting." (BP photo)

BSA welcomes homosexuals

GRAPEVINE, Texas (BP) — Delegates to the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) approved new membership guidelines on May 23 which open the ranks of the organization to homosexual members.

The decision was based on "growing input from within the Scouting family," according to a BSA statement. That input led to a national review of policy, or a "comprehensive listening exercise," resulting in a resolution to remove the restriction "de-

nying membership to youth on the basis of sexual orientation alone."

Some 1,400 delegates to the National Council approved the change in membership standards by a margin of 61-39%, but changes to the adult leadership policy of the organization which forbids homosexual Scout leaders was not up for vote and remains in place.

see SCOUTS on p. 8

Mississippi Baptists on the scene of Oklahoma area flattened by tornado

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Mississippi Baptist disaster relief volunteers departed on Memorial Day for tornado-devastated areas of Oklahoma, after being activated by the national managers of a sweeping Southern Baptist effort to assist victims of the severe weather onslaught that produced at least one tornado with winds over 210 miles per hour.

"We have three teams in Moore from Calhoun Association, Yalobusha Association,



CLEANUP STARTS — Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteer Mike Ford of Lockney, Texas, clears the ground from the property of a survivor of the May 20 EF5 tornado that struck Moore, Ok. (BP photo)

see TORNADO on p. 9

Gallup: Americans yawn at Gosnell abortion offenses

NASHVILLE (BP) — The Gallup polling organization has concluded that Kermit Gosnell's murder trial did not change public opinion on abortion, but it also acknowledged Americans paid little attention to the case.

In a survey conducted May 2-7, Gallup found views on abortion's legality were nearly identical to those of most of the last decade: 52% think abortion should be legal only in certain circumstances; 26% think it should be legal in any circumstance; and 20% think it should be illegal in all circumstances. Of the 52%, 38% said it should be legal only in a few circumstances.

A Philadelphia jury convicted the abortion doctor May 13 of the first-degree murder of three babies who were delivered alive at his abortion clinic. Gosnell received three consecutive life sentences without parole for the murders of the children, who were only a few of hundreds killed after induced delivery at least six months into gestation, according to a grand jury report.

Gosnell or a co-worker typically killed the babies outside the womb by a method he called "snipping" — jabbing scissors into the back of a baby's neck and cutting the spinal cord.

In addition, jurors convicted him of 21 counts of violating a state ban on abortions after 24 weeks of pregnancy and of involuntary manslaughter in the death of a mother after an abortion at a clinic that was a health and safety hazard.

The Gallup poll also found self-identification on the issue remained closely divided: 48% identified themselves as pro-life and 45% as pro-choice.

Gallup reported a minority of Americans paid attention to the trial. Fifty-four percent said they followed news about the case "not at all," while only seven percent said "very closely," 18% "somewhat closely" and 20% "not too closely."

Nearly half, 46%, of those

Americans following the case said the mainstream news media had not provided enough coverage of the trial.

Gallup said it was unclear whether the "relatively low attention to the Gosnell case reflects a lack of interest in it, or a lack of coverage by the mainstream media."

Michael New, an assistant professor of political science at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and an expert on abortion legislation, said the Gosnell trial still may produce "some long-term good for the pro-life movement."

"It may lead to better enforcement of existing abortion clinic regulations," New wrote in a blog post at National Review Online. "It will likely facilitate the passage of stronger regulations on abortion providers. It may also generate some much-needed discussion about the legality of late-term abortions."

"Overall, the Gosnell trial may well shift the national debate on abortion to terrain that is advantageous to pro-lifers."

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Morally straight?

*On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my
country
and to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all
times;
To keep myself physically
strong,
mentally awake, and morally
straight.*

— Boy Scout oath

On my way to becoming an Eagle Scout, I recited those words every week at our Troop 91 meeting in the Scout Hut next door to the Little League baseball field in Belzoni. Forty-five years later, I can still repeat them from heart. Like every other component of Scouting, the oath meant a lot to me then. It still means a lot to me now.

Like my Eagle Scout father before me and my Eagle Scout brother after me, I grew from a boy to a man striving to live up to that oath's ideals. My brother and I also both earned the God and Country Award and achieved the rank of Brotherhood in the Order of the Arrow (a leadership organization within Scouting).

My scoutmasters, Billy Howell, Sr., and Richard Lister, Sr., were real men — Christian family men, men with chests as C.S. Lewis put forth in *The Abolition of Man* — who modeled the oath in front of us. In addition to the hours they spent with us each week at troop meetings, they devoted a significant portion of their hard-earned vacation time every summer to travel with us to Camp Tallaha outside Charleston so we could learn to be even better Scouts. They believed in me, in every other boy in Troop 91, and in that oath.

It was therefore with a profoundly deep sadness that I read last week of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) decision to admit to their troop rolls boys who profess to be homosexual, even though it's questionable whether they actually understand their sexual orientation at such a developmentally tender age. This decision certainly doesn't help on that issue.

BSA has chosen to openly violate the "morally straight" promise in the oath. There are no provisions for individual troops to opt out, just a mandate now from cen-

tral headquarters to do it. If you're going to be involved in BSA, you're going to admit openly homosexual boys like it or not.

The decision pleased no one. Traditionalists have promised to leave the organization, and homosexual groups have vowed to keep up the pressure until homosexual scout leaders are permitted. As reported elsewhere in this issue, Southern Baptist leaders are saying troops sponsored by Southern Baptist churches cannot abide this decision, while a leader at the United Church of Christ said this decision is only a good first step toward total integration of homosexuality into Scouting.

Powerful religious, corporate, and social groups pushed hard for this decision. The Episcopal Church passed a resolution demanding it. Various entities among the splintered Jewish faith endorsed it ahead of the decision. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, also known as Mormons, earlier pulled the rug from underneath opponents when they announced, as the largest supporter of Scout troops among religious organizations, that it essentially made no difference to them.

Randall Stephenson, chief executive of ATT, and James Turley, chief executive of Ernst & Young, and Wayne Brock, BSA chief executive, met beforehand with Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, to try to persuade Southern Baptists to approve of the decision.

The door has been opened to politics and social engineering within BSA. How long will it be before BSA officials bow to pressure and allow homosexual adult leaders? How long will it be before the homosexual lifestyle will be front and center, rewarded with BSA merit badges and recognitions? How long before Scouting resembles nothing with which we have become so familiar over the past 100 years?

In a statement after the decision was made, BSA executive Brock applauded the change in policy and said, "It's time to move on..." On that point, he is right. That's why, with a broken heart, my beloved Eagle Scout badge will soon be in the mail to his office.

Don't abandon Boy Scouts

Results of the much-publicized vote at the 2013 national meeting of the Boy Scouts of America were announced on Thursday evening, May 23. Understandably, this was not what many Baptist denominations and others wanted to see transpire.

Now what? Before deciding, I urge you to prayerfully consider the following.

■ Are the evangelism and family ministry opportunities now lessened in the church's Scout unit(s)? Are the lost and un-enlisted any less our responsibility now? I respectfully remind us that the Great Commission remains unchanged and no vote can alter this reality.

The local church still owns its Scout units and is responsible for selecting the leadership. As "fishers of men," are we not to go where the fish are located? In the case of church-based Scout units, there are unreached people already in your buildings.

In the average Scout unit, as much as 60% of the youth and their families are not currently involved in anyone's church. What an opportunity!

■ Are our churches being compelled to accept homosexual leaders or the homosexual lifestyle? No. In fact, it remains the responsibility of our churches to hold high a standard. The resolution clearly states that "youth are still developing, learning about themselves and who they are, developing their sense of right and wrong, and understanding their duty to God to live a moral life."

Shouldn't Baptists be at the forefront in helping youth find answers which are biblically-based? Keep in mind, too, that there are a number of membership requirements which must still be met, including affirming the declaration of religious principle, doing one's "duty to God, and adhering to the principles of the Scout Oath and Law." In addition, a behavior standard is being set forth which disallows sexual behavior of any kind in Scouting.

Do our churches routinely exclude persons from our other evangelism and outreach efforts, or do we seek to reach them where they are with the Good News and help them discover The Way?

■ Do we surrender the opportunity of involving children, youth, and families in the Religious Emblems Program which is an



Guest opinion
with R. Chip Turner

effective tool for reaching Scouts (and entire families) for Christ, discipling them, and helping many clarify their call to vocational Christian service? I pray not.

■ Does it really matter whether or not Baptists are involved in Scouting? First, the obvious answer is "yes" for every Scout, family, and leader in Baptist units. Second, there are tens of thousands of Baptist Scouts and thousands of Baptist Scout leaders involved in Scouting who are not in Baptist units and we should be serving them, too.

The third largest group of Scouts and leaders at the 2013 National Jamboree will be Baptist.

■ Why not invest our outreach ministry and energies elsewhere? Obviously you can, but why does it have to be an "either/or" situation? There are many fine children and youth programs in our churches which primarily address those already in the church family.

However, what about the unchurched and unreached? Plus, consider the people in your church family who are better members, parents, leaders, and citizens because they had the Scouting experience delivered by godly men and women.

Do we deprive our children and grandchildren of this same life-changing experience? Do we surrender this precious opportunity to others who may not share our values. Shall we abandon an organization which needs our influence now more than ever? Future generations hang in the balance.

The Lord of the Harvest stands ready to help us, guide us, encourage us, empower us, and equip us to reap an abundant ingathering.

Turner, a Texan, is chairman of the BSA Religious Relationships Task Force and past president of the Association of Baptists for Scouting.

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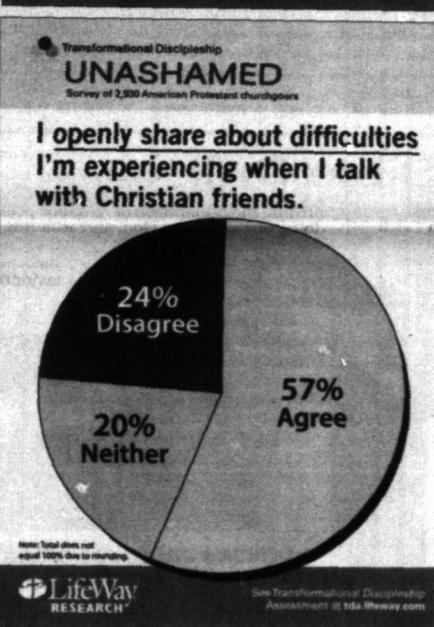
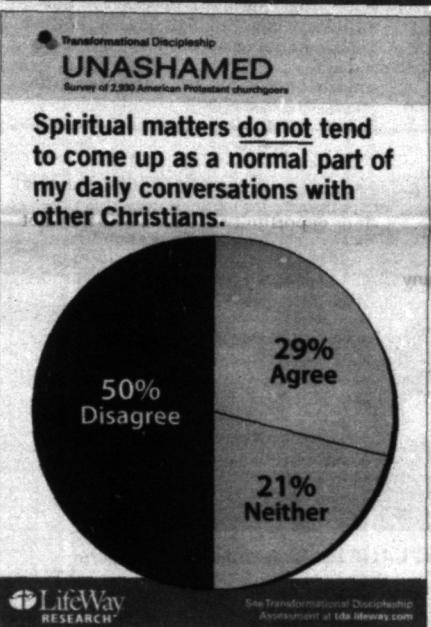
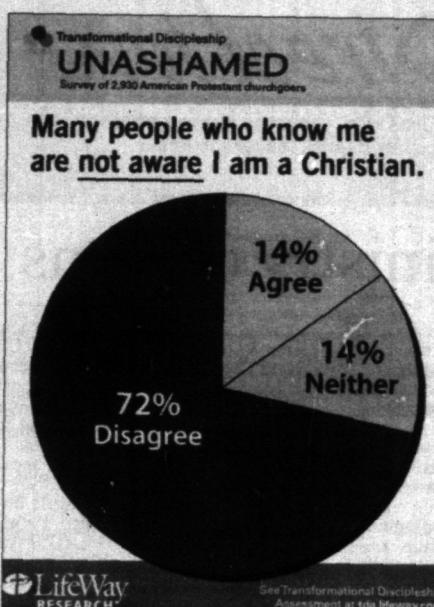
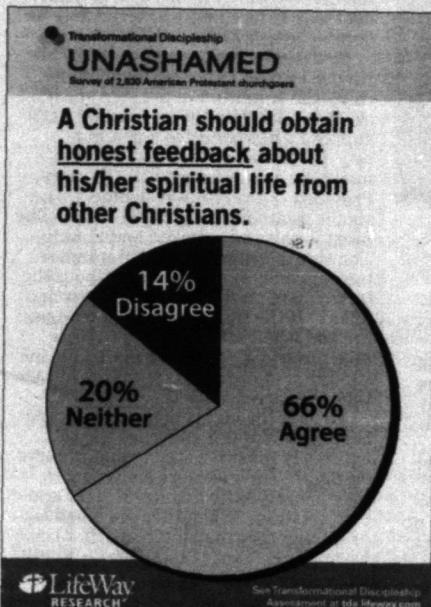
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Are Christians 'unashamed' of letting faith show through?



NASHVILLE (BP) — While not all churchgoers are particularly transparent or open about their faith, mature Christians are consistent in character and identity around non-believers, LifeWay research reveals.

The survey of Protestant churchgoers identifies "unashamed" as one of eight attributes of discipleship that consistently show up in the lives of maturing Christians. Being unashamed connotes a boldness to stand for one's beliefs in conversation and lifestyle, LifeWay Research director Scott McConnell said.

"There are two elements to this discipleship attribute: being unashamed of Jesus Christ around nonbelievers and showing transparency among other Christians," McConnell said. "This transparency is seen when a mature disciple is open to spiritual accountability and willing to share about challenges with other believers."

Churchgoers also seem to think they live out their faith in a manner that is evident to others. Just 14% of churchgoers agree with the statement: "Many people who know me are not aware I am a Christian," while 72% disagree with the statement.

Churchgoers often leave important elements of faith unspoken, the survey shows. Nearly a third (29%) agree that "spiritual matters do not tend to come up as a normal part of my daily conversations with other Christians," while 50% disagree.

According to the survey, 66% of American churchgoers believe Christians should seek out honest feedback about their spiritual life from other Christians. Similarly, 57% of churchgoers say they openly discuss their difficulties with Christian friends. Only one in four does not, according to the survey.

"It is easy for Christians to put their 'church' face on at church and pretend everything is fine," McConnell said,

"but without transparent interaction among followers of Christ, blind spots are left unattended and opportunities for change are unsupported."

The other temptation for Christians is to pretend to be "not-too-religious" when they are around neighbors and co-workers. Yet, Scripture calls believers to not be ashamed of the gospel and its work in our lives.

This research aligns with the biblical accounts of Peter's three denials of Christ with the ever-present struggle and temptation believers face to hide their relationship with Christ."

The research uncovers several characteristics that best predict being unashamed, including reading the Bible frequently, spreading the Gospel, being discipled or mentored one-on-one by a more spiritually mature Christian, confessing sins to God, and praying for fellow Christians, McConnell said.

Only 34% of churchgoers surveyed indicate they pray for fellow Christians they know every day. Ten percent say they do this "once a month" or "rarely/never."

The survey of 2,930 American adults who attend a Protestant church once a month or more was conducted Oct. 14-22, 2011.

To help pastors, churches and individuals measure spiritual development, LifeWay Research used the study's data to develop a questionnaire for believers, called the Transformational Discipleship Assessment (TDA). The online evaluation delivers both individual and group reports on spiritual maturity using the eight attributes of biblical discipleship, and gives helpful and practical suggestions on appropriate next steps for spiritual development.

To learn more about the transformational discipleship research visit LifeWayResearch.com. The TDA is available at tda.lifeway.com.

Scientists announce advance in human cloning for stem cells

WASHINGTON (BP) — The "brave new world" of human cloning apparently has arrived, and ethicists are waving the warning flags.

A group of Oregon-based scientists reported in the journal Cell that they have cloned human embryos, reportedly the first successful attempt at such cloning, as a means of producing embryonic stem cells. The researchers extracted stem cells from the clones, destroying the days-old human embryos in the process.

The scientists used basically

the same cloning method utilized in 1996 by Scottish researchers to create the first cloned mammal, Dolly the sheep.

News of the successful experiment seemed certain to revive the cloning controversy, which has been dormant in recent years. One of the battlegrounds likely will be in the U.S. Congress, which could see new efforts to ban human cloning.

Those efforts probably will involve debates on the extent of a prohibition on cloning for reproductive purposes, or for

both research and reproductive purposes.

Opponents of human cloning, who point out cloning an embryo for experimentation is reproductive by nature because a new human being has been created, criticized the successful research as both unethical and unnecessary. Supporters of the cloning technique sometimes call it "somatic cell nuclear transfer," which simply is the scientific name for cloning.

The cloning technique used by scientists at Oregon Health

and Science University (OHSU) and the Oregon National Primate Research Center was a version of somatic cell nuclear transfer, the method used to create Dolly.

The researchers transferred the nucleus of a cell that contained a person's DNA into an egg that no longer had its nucleus. After stimulation, some of the embryos developed to a stage where they produced stem cells.

Daniel Sulmasy, a professor of medicine and a bioethicist at the University of Chicago, told National Public Radio (NPR),

"This is a case in which one is deliberately setting out to create a human being for the sole purpose of destroying that human being. I'm of the school that thinks that that's morally wrong no matter how much good could come of it."

Opponents of cloning and embryonic stem cell research (ESCR), which is lethal for the human embryos, pointed to other stem cell research that has surpassed ESCR in therapies in human beings and is not ethically controversial.

I had been invited to come and speak at one of our fine churches on Sunday morning at a special Fifth Sunday Service. I was supposed to be the "surprise" preacher for the day. Each fifth Sunday the pastor invited a surprise guest to come and on this fifth Sunday, I filled the bill. In order to enhance the suspense, the plan was for me to go by his house and then we would go on over to the church at about preaching time. I made it to his house fine and we got in my car and headed to the church. Since I had not been to the church, I was not quite sure where it was. But as we traveled down the road the pastor said, "Turn left right up here where there is no sign." I asked, "Where?" He repeated, "Right up here where there is no sign." I was squinting my eyes, and I was looking as hard as I could to find the no sign and then I saw it. Sure enough there was a strong, steel frame painted white with no sign. I haven't mentioned the name of the church because I don't want to embarrass them and they don't need to be embarrassed. What had happened was that somebody had hit the church sign and torn it up. There was a new sign being erected and at that time, it was just a frame with no sign on the side of the road. Soon where there was no sign would be a new sign which would point the way down the road to turn left.

After the service as I was leaving, I went back to the no sign and turned back right in order to get home. It got me to thinking about signs and the importance of them. Signs can

The Ministry of Signs

be extremely helpful. Occasionally, I will be at a church that has no sign of identification anywhere around it. The general consensus is that everybody knows that this is Mount something or other Baptist Church. Well, everybody who has been going there the last 50 years knows that it is, but there are some people who do not know. It needs to be identified.

I remember one day standing and looking at a sign that brought a smile to my face when I read it. I thought well sure everybody knows that is what it is. It was the sign out on the lawn that says, "State Capitol of Mississippi." Well, just about everybody knows that it is the State Capitol Building. In fact, everybody does know that it is the State Capitol of Mississippi except those people who do not know it. For those of

us who assume that everybody knows, we may have forgotten that the Old State Capitol Building is just a couple of blocks away and it is no longer the Capitol. It looks like a Capitol and it sits at the head of Capitol Street so it must be the Capitol, but it's not.

Signs do help immensely because they identify facilities, and they also give directions to help people know where to go and find help. People do not automatically have a GPS system in their brains to enable them to find the church office, a certain staff member's office, the music suite, or the rest rooms. Since most of our churches are built over an extended period of time with little thought, rhyme or reason of how they fit into the former facilities, sometimes our buildings become just a maze of rooms, halls and

cubbyholes that need to be identified. We build according to the need of the moment in a kind of a hodge-podge fashion of connectedness with whatever was before and whatever may be coming afterward.

Sometimes signs speak of things we wished they were not saying. Often times the condition of the sign speaks much louder than the sign itself. Let's suppose a newcomer to a community drives by a church and the sign may have somewhere on it, "Nursery Provided - Everyone Welcome." The sign is weathered, worn and faded. The paint is chipped, cracked and flaking. The signs conveying an unintended message that says something about the lack of care on the part of the church folks. If the sign announcing who we are and when some of the activities take place is in shabby or disrepair, the condition of the sign is speaking louder than the message itself.

You see the fact is that when people come and visit our churches they are extremely sensitive about what is going on there. Their sensors are trying to pickup every little nuance of sight and conversation. When they see a bad sign or no sign they may interpret that sign is shouting, "Don't Stop Here!" Whether we like it or not they may read our sign as saying, "Our church is uncaring. Our programs are ill prepared. Our childcare is not of high quality, and we really do not care."

The author can be contacted at directions@mcb.org.

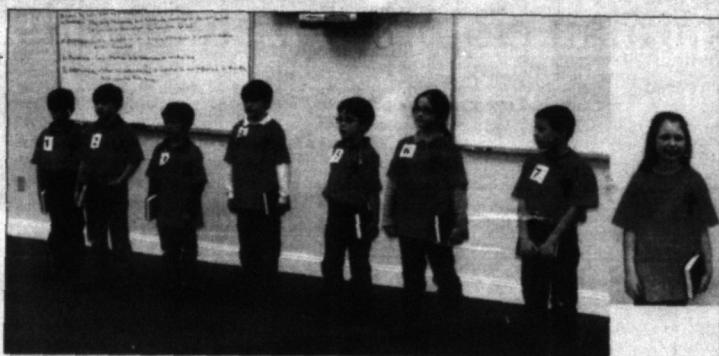
Bible Drill



BAY SPRINGS CHURCH, BAY SPRINGS: front row – Elizabeth Townsend, Evan Kilpatrick, Logan Mayo, McKenzie Stringer, Savannah Dombrowski, and Audrey Wohlschied; back row – Shelby Doolittle, Eli Kilpatrick, Ethan Kilpatrick, and Summer Little.



TUCKERS CROSSING CHURCH, LAUREL: Bible drillers and leaders.



FRIENDSHIP CHURCH, GRENADA: Bible buddies.



WALTHALL CHURCH, WALTHALL: Children and Youth drillers.

Letters to the Editor

Unsigned letters will not be printed.
Multi-copy and form letters will not be printed.

Each correspondent must include a home address and home telephone number for verification. Cell phone numbers are not acceptable. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing. Correspondents must refrain from personal attacks, offensive characterizations, and political partisanship. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

There is no guarantee that an individual's letter will be published. No more than one letter from an individual will be published during a six-month period.

When in the judgment of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with that issue will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.



Editor:

I am blessed to be privileged to serve as associational missions director for Clarke County Baptist Association. I want to share with all Baptist Record readers that the messengers present at our semi-annual associational meeting voted to promote the idea of all our churches giving to their association on a percentage basis. Several of our churches give on a percentage basis now. Also, the messengers voted to recognize

May each year as Associational Emphasis Month. One aspect of this emphasis is that we ask all our churches, in addition to their regular monthly giving, to give a one-time special offering to their association. Also, prayerfully consider opening a special missions account at a bank and save to give to mission causes out of this fund.

Grady Crowell,
missions director
Clarke Association
Quitman

SCRIPTURE SCRAMBLE

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MCONOM OT ANM ; UTB GDO SI

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BARE TI .

SITRF HIANTISCORN : ENT NHEIRTEL

Have fun with scrambled words and exercise your Bible knowledge. Unscramble each word to discover the verse or verses from the King James Version. For an extra challenge, unscramble the passage first before unscrambling the scripture reference.

Lahore riots aimed at Christians sparked by rumors of Islam insult

LAHORE, Pakistan (BP) — The Pakistani college students stepped gingerly through the pile of bricks, barely recognizing the church building. Its once-white walls were ashen from hours of burning, and heat still radiated from glowing embers.

Sarah and Vijay Cheema (not their real names) stood frozen, taking in the scene up and down the street, unsure what to do. All around them, people were hurting as they sat in front of their damaged homes — 180 in all in the mostly Christian-minority community.

Sarah's attention turned to a crying four-year-old girl who said she hadn't eaten in two days. Her family's food and money burned with their home. Sarah immediately opened her backpack and shared her own snacks.

"My heart broke," Sarah said. "It's very painful to see so many hurting at once, especially the young ones who did not understand what had happened."

An angry mob descended on Joseph Colony in Lahore, Pakistan, on March 9, wreaking havoc after accusations that a Christian made a derogatory comment about Muhammad, an illegal act under to Pakistan's blasphemy law.

While Muslims are frequently accused of blasphemy, members of Pakistan's small Christian community are especially vulnerable.

Sarah and Vijay Cheema, who are brother and sister, had watched news reports of angry crowds destroying sections of the small colony and, the next day, decided to take friends across town to offer help.

"I remember that like it was yesterday," Vijay recounted almost two months later. "Our lives changed that day. We knew that we had to help but we were just poor students. We wondered how God could use us if we had no money."

What the Forman Christian College students lacked in funds, however, they made up in energy and drive. They rallied a larger team of friends from the student body, around 18 in all, and put out collection boxes for clothes, money and food.

Meanwhile, the international relief organization Baptist Global Response (BGR) helped the students buy blankets, pillows, utensils, and other supplies through resources provided by BGR's General Support Fund.

"We see this as an opportunity for BGR to enable local students to do what they had a heart to do, but it is more than providing aid to a hurting community," said Francis Horton, who with his wife An-



CHRISTIANS DEVASTATED — More than 180 homes, six shops, and two churches were burned and destroyed in the March 9 attacks on Joseph Colony in Lahore, Pakistan. Students from Forman Christian College in Lahore offered help to those affected by the mass destruction. (BP photo courtesy of Baptist Global Relief)

gie directs BGR work in Central and South Asia.

"It's an investment in the future leaders of this country. It's an opportunity for these students to learn practical lessons about servanthood and look at the world beyond their own little circle."

The students' mentor at Forman Christian College was the one who matched BGR with the relief effort for Joseph Colony residents. She used the project as a way to challenge her students to think long term by really finding out what people in the community needed.

She encouraged them to focus on forming relationships and listening as the victims told their stories. Helping involved more than just meeting physical needs, she told them, but addressing emotional and spiritual needs as well.

The female students on the relief team quickly saw the emotional aspect of the horror. Noor Swati (not her real name) said there was a great need for women to just sit and listen to other women.

In Pakistan, customs hold that women not talk to men, Noor explained. Since most of the relief workers from agencies and government forces were men, the women were not receiving the emotional support they needed or items specific to women such as baby clothes, diapers, and undergarments.

Swati and Sarah sat for hours at a time, holding women and crying with them. Mother after mother recounted the trauma of losing everything in their homes, especially their daughters' dowries. Families spend years collecting the clothes, linens, and money that make up the wedding tradition. They

had no hope of ever replacing the dowry and were worried that their daughters now might never marry.

"I really wanted to help them. They were living on the street. Some of the women were eight months pregnant living like that," Swati said. "Our Bible says that we are to love each other and show compassion. We tried to do everything we could to help."

The student relief team has made 18 visits to the Joseph Colony community, four of which involved distributing aid. The other visits have been for follow-up and investing in lives. The students even celebrated Easter with the community in the newly refurbished church.

"When we started, we had no idea it would be this much work or so hard," Vijay said. "We have learned a lot about being servants and to be tolerant. It is important to help everyone and not just a select few."

The college senior said tolerance was the hardest lesson of all. When the team distributed blankets, pillows, and household items, crowds grew demanding. People pushed and shoved to get to the front for fear the supplies would run out.

One Muslim man kept trying to "face off" with Vijay but the college student ignored him for fear of trouble or a fight. Finally, the man managed to cut Vijay off and looked him in the eye. Then, to the students' surprise, the man thanked them for being kind to everyone — Christians and Muslims.

"Now that man and I are friends. I visit his family every time I go back," Vijay said with a smile. "Our project might be done but our relationships continue."

Just for the Record



The Acteens of **TYLER TOWN CHURCH, TYLER TOWN**, were recently recognized at their missions end of the year program. The Acteens performed several mission action projects throughout this past year including Christmas caroling at the two local nursing homes and delivering cards, making and delivering Thanksgiving gifts for the patients at Walther General Hospital, making and sending cards for the Veteran's Home in Collins, crafting Easter baskets for the adult ladies Sunday School classes at TBC, making gift baskets for the children at Dickerson Place, and participating in several other projects. Shown are, front row: Naomi Beard, Megan McMichael, Brittny Nettles; back row: Laura Lee Dyer, April Dixon, Mary Elizabeth Stringer, and Rachel McKee. Laura Lee Dyer and Mary Elizabeth Stringer were both presented charms for their Acteen bracelets signifying 15 years in missions.



SUNRISE CHURCH, LEAKE COUNTY, honored their graduates May 19. Shown are Shelby Odom and Mary McIntire.



FIRST CHURCH, EUPORA, recently recognized their high school graduates. Shown are Mary Gates Colvin, CharLeigh Hunter, Drew Gray, Colton Hardin, Brad Blaylock, Katie Bailey, and Ashleigh McClellan.

In other Church News:

► **New Sight Church, Brookhaven**, will host a summer quartet festival June 1, 5 p.m., featuring Harvey & Debbie Magree, Hunter May, Revelations, Gloryland, and Bonnie Brown. Love offering.



BEULAH CHURCH, DECATUR, recognized its graduates May 19. Shown, first row, are Courtney Lanier, Jessica Harrison, Heather Sprague, Lacye Harrison, Michelle Lee, and Tyler Graham. Second row, Delton Harrison, Trevor Graham, and Alexander Lee.



SHADY GROVE CHURCH, LUCEDALE, recognized their 2013 high school graduates May 19. Shown are youth pastor Mark Jackson, Andrew Mote, Owen Taylor, and pastor Bruce McKenzie.



MIDWAY CHURCH, PONTOTOC, held a baby dedication service May 5. Shown are Joey and Kathy Sartin with their daughter Katie. Tommy Tackett, pastor.



ECRU CHURCH, PONTOTOC ASSOCIATION, held a baby dedication Mother's Day. Shown are interim pastor Tom Sumrall; Chris, Courtney, and Chloe Garrard; Justin, Abigail, and Eliot McMillen; and Chris, Paige, and Whitt Russell.



TOPEKA CHURCH, JAYESS, performed The Living Last Supper Mar. 24. Deacons and laymen from the church introduced themselves as the biblical characters and told the story about their encounters with Jesus, played by the pastor.

Testimony COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

featuring
Evan Mumbower

The Cooperative Program: Making a Way

The Cooperative Program has brought my calling to a reality. The assistance that the Cooperative Program provided for me throughout college, short-term international missions and now into Seminary, has been a huge blessing. Because of the Cooperative Program, I was able to graduate from Mississippi College in Graphic Design, and it was there that I discovered what God was calling me to do. Through living in the Philippines as a BSU summer missionary, I realized God had called me to GO — to be the hands and feet to a lost and dying world. God pressed upon me the Unreached and the Hard-to-Reach.

After college, my calling to the mission field continued, and in 2008 I was selected to go overseas with the IMB (International Mission Board). I was called to the Unreached and Hard-to-reach as was impressed on my heart in 2005 in the Philippines. I spent two years in a different culture and country, learning to show the light of Christ through the veil of

Islam. I learned the language and customs while overseas so I could communicate and ultimately share the Gospel of Christ. My time overseas was not easy, but so very rewarding.

Throughout my time in missions, the network of churches that the Cooperative Program empowers brought prayer and support from many believers. This support continues today for my wife and me, as we are in Seminary preparing to go overseas in the near future. The Cooperative Program is allowing us to learn how to plant churches so we can disciple the Unreached and Hard-to-Reach.

I would like to say "Thank You" to the Cooperative Program for the blessing you have been to me in the past, and now to our family. "God will make a way, where there seems to be no way." Through you, our call to missions is now a reality. Thank you for allowing God to use you to "make a way" for us.

To view this Cooperative Program Testimony online, please visit <http://www.mbc.org/cp/videos.aspx>

Vacation Bible School

► **Tillatoba Church, Tillatoba:** Registration, June 1, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.; classes, June 2-6, 6 - 8:30 p.m.; family night, June 7, 6 - 8:30 p.m.

► **Rocky Point Church, Carthage:** June 3 - 7, 9 a.m. - noon; all children and youth; Lita Moore, director; Shane McGivney, pastor.

► **Corinth Church, Heidelberg:** June 17 - 21, 6 - 8:30 p.m.; ages 3 - 17; for information, call (601) 787-3828.

► **Society Hill and Hawthorn Churches, Oakvale:** June 3 - 7, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. at Society Hill; commencement, June 9, 5 p.m., followed by fellowship meal.

Just for the Record



CALvary CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, honored its mothers on Mother's Day. Ruth Crosby was the oldest mother. Rowena McGee was the oldest mother with the most children present. Jenny Leggett was the youngest mother with most children present. Kari Gill was the youngest mother present. Shown are Crosby, McGee, Leggett, Gill, and pastor Hal Hatten.



The CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S JOB CORPS OF PHILADELPHIA recognized graduates from their Jobs For Life and Job and Life Skills training program May 6th at The City Limits Restaurant in Philadelphia. Each participant received a Certificate of Completion from the program. Participants, front row: Keiwana Miller, Sharlene Young, Taren Wallace, and Alisha Dunn. Mentor/Volunteers back row: Sue Keen, Mickey Gibson, Linda Brewer, and Teresa Williams.



THE LADIES OF FIRST CHURCH, BELZONI, made sleeping mats for the homeless out of plastic grocery and dollar store bags. Shown are Jeanette Russell, Leona Hardin, Linda Johnson, Sue Forbes, Debbie Herring, and Sam Herring.



NEW LIBERTY CHURCH, SCOTT COUNTY, ordained Chet Barnes as deacon Aug. 12, 2012. Shown are Barnes and pastor Paul Smith.



The women at The Nichols Center in Madison received Mother's Day roses from the WMU of **OLD RICE ROAD CHURCH, MADISON.** Shown are Rita Harris, Robin Thompson, and Jo Ann Moore.



WALNUT CHURCH, WALNUT, honored its children's choir for their faithful commitment in leading the call to worship each Sunday evening. They are shown with pastor Danny Allen.

SCOUTS

cont. from p. 1

Rules on heterosexual and homosexual sexual misconduct also remain in place for Scouts and Scout leaders.

Wayne Brock, who leads the organization, said in a press conference that the decision has been made and it is now best "to move forward and it is time to stand together."

"America needs Scouting and everyone within Scouting needs to stay focused on that which unites us — reaching and serving young people to grow into good, strong citizens," Brock said. He added that he believed good people can disagree but still work together.

John Stemberger, who has waged a national campaign to keep the ban on homosexual Scouts in place through the website OnMyHonor.net, said the "most influential youth organization in America had turned a sad corner."

The Boy Scouts of America have demonstrated that values are not timeless," Stemberger said in a statement after the vote. "The Boy Scouts are now teaching kids that when your values are no longer popular, change them."

Stemberger said BSA leaders had succumbed to the pressure of special interest groups by making the change to the membership policy. "The leaders of the Boy Scouts of America make decisions like politicians placing their fingers in the air to see which way the wind is blowing."

Stemberger added that May 23 was the last day he would wear a Boy Scouts of America uniform. He said he plans to call a coalition together to discuss creating a new youth organization centered on biblical values, a call echoed by many religious leaders.

"We had hoped to keep sex and politics out of Scouting," Stemberger said. "We grieve today not because we are leaving the Boy Scouts of America, but because the Boy Scouts left us."

He believes the BSA can expect to lose no fewer than 200,000 members and \$30 million in funding.

Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President Frank Page, who had met with Scouting leaders and urged them to maintain the current policy, said he was "deeply saddened" that the BSA overturned its "constitutionally protected expressive message that homosexual behavior is incompatible with the principles enshrined in the Scout Oath and Scout Law."

"We know that the pressures exerted against the voting members of the 1,400 chartered organizations by homosexual activist groups have been unrelenting," Page said. "We are grateful for each voting member who voted in the minority, but our sadness for the Scouting organization as a whole cannot be overstated."

Page said the vote "ushers in a sea-change in the credibility of the Boy Scouts of America as a

Religious groups react to BSA vote

"To claim that the Boys Scouts is the nation's foremost youth program of character development and values-based leadership training suddenly rings hollow." — Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee

"While it is welcomed progress, this new policy decision is only a step." — Mike Schuenemeyer, United Church of Christ executive for Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender concerns

"As Southern Baptists, our commitment to the Word of God and Christian values must take priority over what is 'politically correct.'" — Fred Luter, president of the Southern Baptist Convention

"We desire to maintain a relationship with BSA, but cannot compromise integrity to our religious beliefs." — Vicki Biggs, director of Integrated Communications for Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

"Depending on how radically the BSA applies this new policy to local troops, I suspect many will be seeking an alternative to the Boy

Scouts to train up boys toward a life of virtue." — Russell Moore, president-elect of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

"We believe that the BSA policy change will lead to a mass exodus from the Boy Scout program, as Assemblies of God and many other churches can no longer support groups that are part of an organization allowing members who are openly homosexual." — Assemblies of God statement

"The Boy Scouts have planted the seed of their own destruction." — Roger S. Oldham, vice president for convention communications and relations with the SBC Executive Committee

"The National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) will determine how it may impact Catholic chartered Scout units and activities. In doing so, we will work within the teachings of our Catholic faith and with the various local bishops and their diocesan Scouting committees." — NCCS statement

From various sources

viable boys' organization for millions of Americans who believe strongly in the principles of biblical morality. To claim that the Boys Scouts is the nation's foremost youth program of character development and values-based leadership training suddenly rings hollow."

"We continue to pray for our country. We believe we are in desperate need of a genuine spiritual awakening that will transform lives through the power of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," Page said.

Southern Baptist Convention President Fred Luter called it "a sad day in the history of an organization that for years stood on Christian principles, particularly for the thousands of Southern Baptists who grew up as Boy Scouts like myself."

"My prayers go out to the parents and churches who have been forced to make decisions about being a part of the Boy Scouts organization. As Southern Baptists, our commitment to the Word of God and Christian values must take priority over what is 'politically correct.'"

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, predicted a departure of religious groups from BSA.

"Frankly, I can't imagine a Southern Baptist pastor who would continue to allow his church to sponsor a Boy Scout

troop under these new rules," said Land. "I predict there will be a mass exodus of Southern Baptists and other conservative Christians from the Boy Scouts."

"The supposed compromise takes away their best defense. In the year 2000, the Supreme Court ruled the Boy Scouts did not have to have homosexual Scoutmasters because the homosexual lifestyle was contrary to the core values of Scouts."

"If you're going to allow openly gay Scouts to participate in Scouting, then it's no longer a core value, and so what we're going to see now is a flood of litigation by pro-homosexual groups arguing that the continuing ban on gay Scoutmasters is... prejudice and they will win."

"They will win, because the Boy Scouts have stripped themselves of their defense the Supreme Court used."

Land advised Southern Baptist churches to withdraw their support of Scout troops and support the Royal Ambassadors ministry to boys.

A.J. Smith, president of the Association of Baptists for Scouting, echoed Land's sentiment and said he is more concerned about the message sent to young people today. He said the organization had abandoned 100 years of teaching about solid moral values.

"The BSA is now sending a mixed message to youth and the nation. On the one hand they are



saying that sexual activity among Scout-aged youth is contrary to Scouting virtues, and on the other hand they are opening the door to youth members regardless of their self-identified sexual orientation. For Baptist churches with Scouting units, this presents a unique challenge."

The statement from the BSA leadership said the new membership policy is effective Jan. 1, 2014, allowing the organization enough time to implement the policy and communicate it to its 116,000 units. The statement also said the organization would not be distracted from its mission by a "single, divisive and unresolved societal issue."

Leaders said there are no plans to review the issue further.

Russell Moore, president-elect of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission who will replace the retiring Richard Land on June 1, said the decision puts the "sexual revolution's onward march" squarely in the middle of Scouting.

"Few, if any, are suggesting the Boy Scouts kick out boys based on their particular temptations. We don't, and shouldn't do that in our churches, much less in the Scouts," Moore told Baptist Press, "but this change is more than this. It doesn't speak in terms of temptations but in terms of the claiming of a sexually politicized identity as morally neutral."

Local Scouting troops sponsored by evangelical, Roman

Catholic, or Latter-day Saints congregations, "will be pressured to mute a definition of 'morally straight' that includes a sexuality intended only for the lifelong one-flesh union of a man and a woman in marriage," Moore said.

"Depending on how radically the BSA applies this new policy to local troops, I suspect many will be seeking an alternative to the Boy Scouts to train up boys toward a life of virtue," he said.

The revision of the membership policy "highlights how important it is for churches to speak clearly of both our love for all people, including our gay and lesbian neighbors, and the importance of God's design for human sexuality for human flourishing," Moore said.

"The Gospel doesn't define us, as the culture does, in terms of our wants and desires. The Gospel addresses us, all of us, as sinners and calls us to a life of freedom and cross-bearing sacrifice."

The culture is confused, Moore said, as it always is in a fallen world. "Our voluntary associations, even the most venerable of them, are increasingly ambiguous about what it means to live a good life rooted in the permanent things. Our churches cannot, and will not, share that ambiguity."

The BSA statement ended by acknowledging the different opinions held on the matter of homosexuality, but said children were "better off when they are in Scouting."

TORNADO

cont. from p. 1

and Temple Church in Hattiesburg, said Jim Didlake, director of the Men's Ministry Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in Jackson and coordinator of the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force.

"We also have a Coving-ton-Jeff Davis Association

team, state equipment, and three incident command team members on the way to Shawnee," he said.

Didlake has earlier reported that mass feeding needs were being met by units from Oklahoma Baptists and Baptist disaster relief units from surrounding states. Mississippi Baptist volunteers' assignments will be mainly removal of heavy debris and preparation to haul it away.

Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 3:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

About 25 Mississippi Baptist volunteers will be in the initial deployment. Plans are being made to rotate more Mississippi Baptist volunteers into the Moore area as the relief effort moves into a long-term phase, Didlake said.

A team of Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force volunteers is also currently working in DeSoto County to assist with mud-out work on about 20 homes that were af-

fected when a levee failed on a catch pond. Mud-out work involves cleaning mud and debris from buildings and removing destroyed materials such as drywall and carpeting.

The Moore tornado, as measured on the Enhanced Fujita scale, was calculated to be an EF5 - the highest category reserved for only the largest and most violent tornadoes. By way of comparison, the massive tornado that struck Hattiesburg and the surrounding area on Feb. 10 of this year was classified as an EF4 with winds of 170 miles per hour.

According to Baptist Press, the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Alpharetta, Ga., coordinates and manages Southern Baptist responses to major disasters through partnerships with 42 state Baptist conventions, most of which have their own state disaster relief programs. The MBCB Men's Ministry Department manages the partnership in Mississippi.

Southern Baptists have 82,000 trained volunteers and chaplains, and 1,550 mobile units for feeding, chainsaw, mud-out, command,

On the web

For more information, visit mbcb.org and click on the crawl at the top of the page.

communication, childcare, shower, laundry, water purification, repair/rebuild, and power generation.

The Southern Baptist disaster relief ministry is one of the three largest mobilizers of trained disaster relief volunteers in the United States, along with the American Red Cross and The Salvation Army.

To help the Oklahoma storm victims, donations can be made to the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force. Checks should be made out to MBCB, with "Oklahoma Tornado Relief" noted on the memo line. Donations can be mailed to MBCB Business Office, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. In-kind donations are not being accepted at this time.

For more information, visit mbcb.org and click on the crawl at the top of the page.

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All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

MS POSITIONS

BUCATUNNA BAPTIST CHURCH located south of Meridian in the Energy-Snell community of Clark County is actively seeking God's man for the position of a Bi-Vocational Youth Minister. Please email resumes to dochg@bucatunna.net or mail to BBC Search Committee, P.O. Box 865, Merion, MS 38642. Call Office at 662-795-4638 or Solo Team at 662-916-5768.

YOUTH PASTOR/DIRECTOR/MINISTER/COORDINATOR. Denomination: Southern Baptist. First Baptist Church, Collinsville, MS is seeking a full-time Youth Pastor; see ipsc@fbc.com for further details.

GUNTER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH, FLORENCE, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please send resumes to rcb@gbchc.net, if mailing please send to 2005 Woodlawn Place, Florence, MS 39073.

FREEDOM BAPTIST CHURCH OF LAUREL, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. Resumes may be sent to: Freedom Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, 971 Freedom Road, Laurel, MS 39093.

STEEP HOLLOW BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A MINISTER OF MUSIC (PART-TIME). Please send resumes to Steep Hollow Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, 2336 Hwy 53, Poplarville, MS 39470. Call Office at 662-795-4638 or Solo Team at 662-916-5768.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MCALPIN, MS IS CURRENTLY SEEKING A PASTOR. Resumes may be sent to FBC of McAlpin, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 66, McAlpin, MS 39456. For further information concerning position, size of church, salary package, etc., contact Mr. Ross Liles at 662-749-1985.

LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH, FLOWOOD, MS IS SEEKING A MINISTER TO CHILDREN & FAMILIES. Resumes may be emailed to office@lbcflowood.org, or mailed to Children's Search Team, 5199 Lakeland Dr, Flowood, MS 39032.

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

FEBRUARY 2013

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Underwood	James Holly	Mr. & Mrs. Larry R. Fulton	Mr. Joe Nester Mr. & Mrs. Bill Newsom
Doris Hurst	Doris Hurst	Mrs. Myrtice H. Fulton	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Mr. & Mrs. Larry R. Fulton	Doris Hurst	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman	Anthony Nichols Mr. & Mrs. Myron Johnson
Fulton	Mrs. Ernestine Johnson	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman	Mr. & Mrs. Bill Newsom
Mrs. Myrtice H. Fulton	Ms. Ann E. Smith	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman	Mr. & Mrs. Larry Bennett
N. Davis	Joe Glynn Johnson	Arthur and Mary Nail	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
N. Davis	Pine Burr BC	Mr. & Mrs. Myron Johnson	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Josephine Jones	Josephine Jones	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Ms. Joyce E. Howell	Ms. Joyce E. Howell	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Mr. Elton Kennedy	Mr. Elton Kennedy	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Mrs. Mary D.	Mrs. Mary D.	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Hartford	Hartford	Anthony Nichols	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Mr. & Mrs. George M. Eagle	Mr. & Mrs. George M. Eagle	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Mr. David Lee King	Mr. David Lee King	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Mr. Allen S. Woodard	Mr. Allen S. Woodard	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Bille Jane Klepzig	Bille Jane Klepzig	Les & Carla Dungan	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Ms. Martha H. Klepzig	Ms. Martha H. Klepzig	Mr. & Mrs. Jay Gore	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Klepzig	Katherine Lackey	Mrs. Wanda Park	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Mrs. Betty Harris	Mrs. Betty Harris	Mrs. Margaret M. Davis	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
David "Dave" Wood Lacy	David "Dave" Wood Lacy	E. Leon Parker	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Blair	Mr. & Mrs. Jim Blair	Mr. & Mrs. John F. Miller	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Ms. Mildred Loper	Ms. Mildred Loper	Ms. Karen L. Byrd	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman
Mrs. Karen L. Byrd	Dean Peoples	Dean Peoples	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Chrestman

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR JUNE 2, 2013

God Begins the Story • Genesis 1:1,26-27; 2:15-17; 3:6-7,14-19,23-24

Everybody loves a good story. From the beginning, God began to share His Story with people. God's Story began before the first verses of the Bible were written; His Story continues long after the last words of Scripture were penned. This summer, we will be studying God's Story, that illustrative metanarrative running from Genesis to the Revelation.

Before we begin, let me explain what I mean by "metanarrative" and provide the theological underpinnings for viewing the Bible as a metanarrative. The Bible is comprised of hundreds of vignettes, small stories about how different people lived their lives, how they either lived by faith in God or failed to do so, and how God responded to both human faith and human failure. Metanarrative is the big story binding the little stories together, creating a storyline running through the Bible's pages.

The metanarrative is grounded in theological facts. First, there is one and only one true God. Second, God in His infinite wisdom and power created people for fellowship and for worship. Third, by disobeying God, people fell out of fellowship with Him; their sin created a relational gulf too vast for all human goodness to span. Fourth, God took the initiative to span this relational gulf by revealing Himself throughout human history. Fifth, people can reconnect with God by turning from their sin, placing their faith in His grace, and affirming His

revelation of Himself. Martin Luther, the great 16th century German reformer defined sin as "refusing to let God be God." (Pelikan, Acts, 150). Only God can reverse the curse and enable people to worship Him as God.

God Creates (Gen. 1:1,26-27)

God's first revelation of Himself is as Creator (1:1). The verb 'bara' meaning "to create" is used only of God in Scripture. No one besides God can hold the unique

status of Creator. He alone has made all that exists, both animate and inanimate. God created people in His image and according to His likeness, something that is said of no other creature (1:26-27). The Apostle Paul would later quote Greek poets to remind the Athenians that in God alone "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). As Creator, God stands in a position of superiority and independence over all creation. Conversely, as creatures, people are in a subordinate



Explore the Bible with W. Wayne VanHorn

position to God and are dependent upon Him. We exist solely to serve Him!

Humanity Rebels (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:6-7)

God reveals Himself to people as the great Provider. First, in Genesis 2:15, God provided Adam a place to live, the Garden of Eden.

Second, He provided the first man an occupation, to work and to take care of the garden. Third, God provided the man with all the food

he needed, allowing him to eat freely "from any tree in the garden" (2:16; NIV). Finally, God provided the man with a relational boundary, he could not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:17). The first man could express his love for God by both enjoying what God permitted and by abstaining from what God prohibited. Love is expressed through the choices we make!

Sadly, God's Story reveals that Eve and Adam bought into the Serpent's false storyline, abandoning God's truth. Lured by the

prospect that the tree of knowledge would provide good food, that it was "pleasing to the eye" and that one could gain wisdom, the first humans rebelled against God and ate the tree's fruit. They discovered they were naked and quickly tried to cover their newly discovered knowledge as quickly as possible.

Sin has Consequences (Gen. 3:14-19, 23-24)

God's prohibition to Adam not to eat from the tree of knowledge included a stark notice of the dire consequences of disobedience, "for when you eat of it you shall surely die" (2:17b; NIV). A literal rendering of the Hebrew would be "dying, you will begin to die," a truth that reverberates many times over throughout the metanarrative of God's Story in every arena of life following Adam and Eve's rebellion (3:16-19). As the agent of temptation, the serpent was cursed. His doom was foretold in what early Christians referred to as the Protoevangelium or "First Gospel" (Gen. 3:14-15), viewing Jesus Christ as the ultimate fulfillment of the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head. Jesus alone could open the way to the tree of life, guarded since people first rebelled (3:23-24).

VanHorn is Dean of the Mississippi College School of Christian Studies and the Arts.

Is This Really Happening to Me? • Job 1:1-3,8-11,20-22; 2:7, 9-10

The Book of Job, one of the ancient literary treasures of mankind, records the account of the man named Job—a man who was blameless and upright; who feared God and shunned evil. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East. (Job 1: 1, 3b)

The writer establishes in the very first verse that Job was a real person, a man of high character—not a parable or mythical man—and that his story is a real story. Job was a righteous man, to the extent of being thoroughly righteous. His character was his hallmark. True righteousness evidenced in one's attitude toward God. Other righteous men of that ancient era were Abraham and Melchizedek.

In addition to being a righteous man, Job was a wealthy man having ten children and possessing great herds of livestock, and many servants. Culturally, wealth was considered to be evidence of God's blessing and approval of a man. However, that is not to say that God's displeasure was evidenced in the lack of wealth, but rather due to circumstance.

The harmony, love and friendship of the family was demonstrated by the invitation to the sisters along with the brothers to attend the feast in celebration of a son's birthday. Inviting the sisters also showed that

these were honorable occasions and not for revelry or sensuous satisfaction.

One day the members of the heavenly council or heavenly court of angels were assembled in heaven and were joined by Satan. God begins the conversation with Satan by asking "from whence he had come." Satan's reply, "... from going to and fro" is a play on words as for the spying eyes and ears of the king. God focuses on Job by asking, "Have you set your heart upon my servant Job?" Satan counters with a shrewd question of his own—"Does Job fear God for nothing?" Asking a question rather than making an assertion was much safer. He could cast dispersions on Job without risk of liable. His questioning the motives of Job involved the virtue of his faithfulness to God. Questioning his motive left Job no comeback for defense. "Satan is out to prove that there is no goodness and that such a thing as a good man is impossible." (Sermons from

Job, Clovis Chappell)

The faith of Job's day briefly stated is this: First, goodness always issues prosperity. A good man is successful financially. He enjoys good health, no aches or pains. As a family man, he succeeds and his children share his prosperity. He is the possessor of that inner peace that all men desire. Second, wickedness issues in adversity—a wicked man is sure to suffer the worst of

everything. It made no difference what the person said about his state of being; the observer had no difficulty in distinguishing

between a good man and one who was evil. Job had experienced the marks of prosperity, proof positive of his high moral character; but when he began to suffer affliction, by definition he bore the proof positive that he was a wicked man.

God, knowing Job's character, agreed that Satan could remove everything Job had, but could not touch the man himself.

Bible Studies for Life with Marion D. Duncan



Satan struck drastically killing Job's livestock, his servants, and finally his sons and daughters. But, Job did the unthinkable. He fell on the ground in worship of God saying, "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing. He still had his integrity—soundness, completeness.

Satan returns to God and proposes that Job would curse Him if his body were attacked. God agrees to the test, but Job's life must be spared. So Satan afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. This condition forced Job out of the community and, "theologically in that day," indicated that he was out of fellowship with God. This belief explains Job's wife's advice, "Curse God and die!" To her, Job was as good as dead already because he was cut off from Him and to be struck dead for cursing God would bring swift merciful relief. Job's response, "... Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said." His integrity is still intact. (In the Hebrew, this does not imply that Job sinned in his unspoken thoughts.)

Duncan is a member of First Church, Starkville.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Grace Church, Laurel:** Homecoming, June 2; services followed by lunch and gospel singing; Stubbom Love, music.

► **Canaan Church, Benton County:** Homecoming and revival, June 2 - 5; Sun., services,

11 a.m., followed by fellowship meal and afternoon singing; Paul Adams, speaker; Turner Family, music; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; James Adams, speaker; Kenny and Jennifer Harrison, music; Paul Adams, pastor.

► **West Shady Grove Church, Wayne County:** Homecoming, June 2; services, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Mitchell Smith, pastor.

► **Calvary Church, Pricedale:** Homecoming, June 2; fellowship with refreshments, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; David A. Millican, speaker; Floyd Davis, pastor.

► **Shiloh Church, Big Creek:** Homecoming, June 2; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by potluck lunch; Johnny Hearn, speaker; Shiloh's ensemble, Grace, music.

► **Mt. Carmel Church, Edinburgh:** Revival, June 2 - 5; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Danny Dodds, speaker.

► **Coila Church, Coila:** Home-

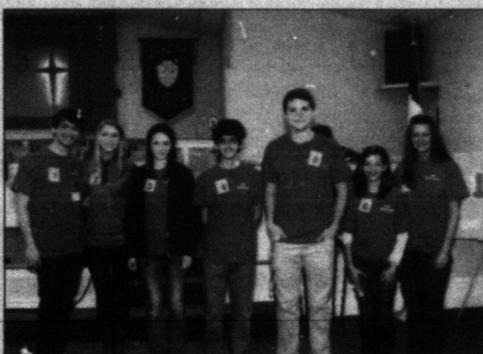
coming and revival, June 2 - 5; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by lunch and music by Promised Quartet; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Perry Irvin, speaker.

► **Coldwater Church, Philadelphia:** Homecoming, June 9; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by potluck dinner; Mike Ragan, speaker; Tim and Andrea Moore, music.

Bible Drill



PEARL RIVER ASSOCIATION: Associational Bible drillers.



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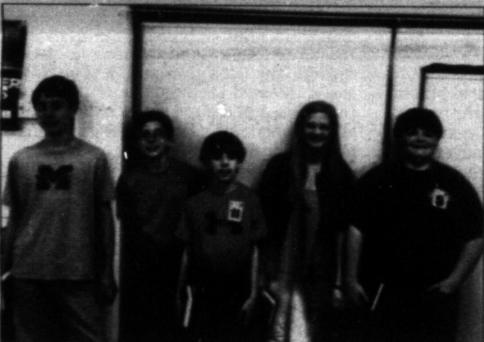
PEARL RIVER ASSOCIATION: Associational Bible drillers.



SUNRISE CHURCH, LEAKE COUNTY: Bible drillers and leaders.



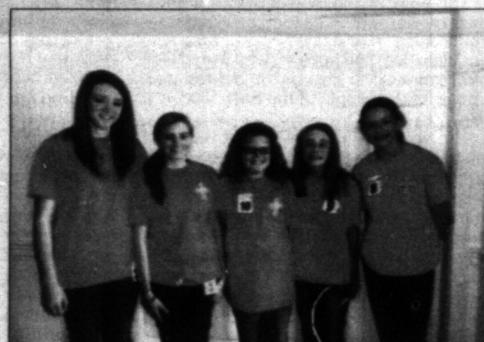
FIRST CHURCH, NETTLETON: Shown are the participants.



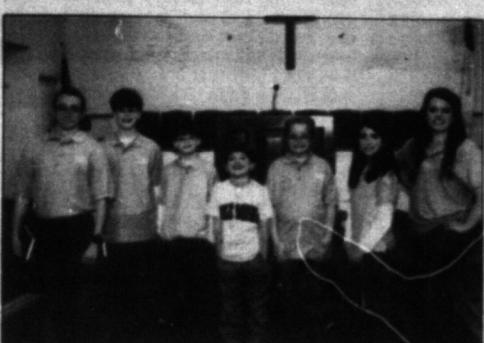
FIRST CHURCH, KOSCIUSKO: Britt Grace, Sam Rigby, Evan Miles, Ashlee Kate Blackwell, and Merritt Blackwell.



LOLLARS GROVE CHURCH, EUPORA: Participants and leaders.



STANDING PINE CHURCH, LEAKE ASSOCIATION: Abbie Scott, Hailey Jamison, Savanna Greer, Ashley Smith, Clancy Scott.



POPE CHURCH, PANOLA ASSOCIATION: Bible Buddies, Children, & Youth drillers; Tyler Shook, Ben Rowsey, Will Rowsey, Rowan Baker, Emily Taylor, Anna Katherine Baker, and Amelia Bailey.



GUM GROVE CHURCH, LINCOLN COUNTY: Children and Youth drillers; front row, Jared Mathis, Jonathan Mathis, and Elizabeth Stogner; back row, Jacey Whittington, Timothy Stogner, Abbey Grace Stogner and Emily Goss.



FIRST CHURCH LAKE WASHINGTON, GLEN ALLAN: front row - Emma Sharpe, Jenna McLendon, and Linden Dinkins; back row - John Davis Sharpe, Kate McLendon, Banks Dinkins, and Mary Carol Sharpe.